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ABSTRACT

Statistics bear out the futility of the overemphasis of collegiate preparation at the elementary and secondary levels. To meet the challenge of relevance and utility, the role of formal vocational training has enjoyed increasing attention within the educational system in the past decade. Yet even with this, half of our nation's students are not being prepared for further education, for training, or for employment. A major revision in the educational delivery system is needed. In Rhode Island this is being approached at two levels, the preschool through Grade 12 level and the postsecondary and adult continuing education level. A task force has been created to study the postsecondary programs and services and to make recommendations for the development of an open university system. At the preschool through Grade 12 level, a program is being launched to develop the career education concept as the central theme of elementary and secondary education. The purpose of this State project is to test the theory that a career-oriented program is superior to the traditional orientation and to determine which components or techniques are most effective. Included in this accession are two additional papers, one outlining the development and evaluation components of the State career education project and the other further discussing this project under the title "Career Decision Making as the Focus of a K-12 Curriculum". (MF)

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Career Education

In The

1970's

A Speech Delivered

By

Dr. Fred G. Burke
Commissioner of Education
State of Rhode Island

To

The Rhode Island Industrial
Arts Teachers' Association

March 21, 1972

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American public education has been the target of much criticism of late, directed from both within and without. Whether from businessmen or minority groups, parents or teachers, there is a serious frustration with the apparent inability of the schools to prepare students for a productive role in the society. There has been a cry for relevancy from every corner, and clear opposition to what is regarded as an irrelevant academic curriculum that does not meet the practical needs of students or society. Achieving relevancy for a large, varied population which lives in a highly complex and transitional society is difficult for so institutionalized a system. Although many attempts have been made, there has been little success in meeting the goal of educating each individual towards his potential in the style of life of his choice. It does seem that we have too often valued an idealistic quest for knowledge for its own sake as superior to the more directly useful education which might prepare a person for the real experiences of his life.

This ordering of priorities stems from deep roots in American history. Although public educators in the United States have historically declared their primary goal to be the preparation of citizens for productive role in the society, the schools have more often directed their attentions toward the needs of a small and privileged class grouping which could climb to the highest academic levels. In a simple society jobs could be learned at home or in the community, and required only a minimum of formal schooling. What schooling there was could therefore be channeled away from job preparation towards a general academic and erudite ideal. Though the number of people enrolled in the public schools has increased rapidly, and though the society demands much more complex skills for its job seekers, we have maintained our orientation towards an academic education, designed for collegiate preparation.

Statistics bear out the futility of the over-emphasis of collegiate preparation at the elementary and secondary level. Though we espouse to educate everyone, we continue to emphasize college education as the only worthwhile goal, while nationally only two out of every ten students who enter first grade ever finish college. These statistics change rapidly but we still leave a large percentage of students unaccounted for.

It is time to end the false position of inferiority that non-academic education has suffered from, for as Aldred North Whitehead observed, "Pedants sneer at an education that is useful. But if education is not useful, what is it?"

To meet the challenge of relevance and utility, the role of formal vocational training has enjoyed increasing attention within the educational system in the past decade. We now are in the process of strengthening the statewide system of state and area vocational schools at both the secondary and the post-secondary levels Yet even with this increased emphasis only three of our original ten first graders complete vocational-technical programs. Two in 10 complete college; three in 10 complete vocational programs. In total our system directly prepares only 50% of its citizens for a productive role in society.

Half of our nation's students, a total of approximately 1 1/2 million a year nationally, are being offered a curriculum that is neither fish or fowl, that neither prepares them for further education, for training, or for employment. In effect it prepares them for no meaningful, productive role in society.

The general approach to education has been under fire for quite some time. Critics from all sides have called for relevancy, meaningfulness, and quality education until the very terms have lost significance. Legislators, school boards, and educators have pumped millions of dollars into the failing heart of education as if money alone would bring needed reforms. But money for more of the same will not help the 50% who now leave school unprepared, nor will it meet future challenges for educating all students. The nature of the needed change must be closer to a

heart transplant than to the application of more and more bandaids.

This necessity for a major reform in the educational delivery system is further supported by the predictions of crystal ball gazers. Scholars think that in the future our technological society will become increasingly complex and will change at a faster and faster pace. In order to keep pace with the varying lifestyles and technologies, people will be required to switch occupations ten to twelve times in the course of a lifetime. The current educational system with its prescibed curriculum does not help students to make single decisions about careers, let alone to make multiple decisions for a variety of life patterns. Students must be taught to make decisions, and we must provide educational environments in which the implications of various decisions can be considered and necessary skills learned. The ability to decide and to act out one's decisions are skills essential to survival in this changing world.

The Education Act of 1969 is the first step toward an administrative "Heart transplant" for education in Rhode Island. Proposals for major alterations in the funding and management of education across the state is another step towards the educational systems which the future requires. But we must be concerned with more than administrative change, we must reform the delivery of education in the classroom. We must promote a system that teaches people to operate successfully in a highly transitional society, that tailors educational activities toward developing independence and self-determination, that meets the needs and aspirations of every citizen of this state at whatever point in time they require educational services. We must implant a system from pre-school to adulthood that helps its participants to plan, develop and carry out their chosen pattern of life. Education must become a part of the process of living, not merely a cloistered preparation for it.

In the state department we are approaching the need for new delivery systems at two levels: first, at the pre-school through grade 12 level and secondly, at the

post-secondary, adult continuing education level. While two separate programs are being launched, the basic concept of meeting individual needs unites both activities.

Our activities at the post-secondary, adult continuing education level are centered around the creation of a task force of concerned citizens and professional educators. Their purpose will be first, to study the diversity of programs now being offered at the post-secondary level in the state, second, to formulate a plan to consolidate these services, and ultimately to make recommendations for the development of an open university system in Rhode Island.

The open university is envisaged as a vehicle for individualizing degree and certificate granting programs for adults. The open university would give credit for a diversity of courses and experiences which might be obtained through a variety of educational resources in Rhode Island, both public and private. Programs could be designed to meet the career goals and scheduling needs of each student.

For example, a young man with a few years experience as a draftsman who desires to upgrade himself to a design engineer could be given credit for two years of college by crediting him for his ability in drafting and by administering a college level equivalency exam. He could then be scheduled for evening courses at U.R.I. in Kingston or the extension division, the Junior College or one of the private institutions or a combination of courses using several schools. The program would reflect his individual interests and needs. On completion the open university would then grant him a B.S. degree in engineering on the basis of his test results, his experience and his course work.

In another instance a 10th grade dropout who has had experience as a retail salesman may desire to become an industrial electronics salesman. He doesn't need a degree but he does need a high school equivalency plus some specific skills in electronics and possibly management. He would be prepared for and administered his high school equivalency exam and then scheduled at one or several institutions for the specific courses he needs, such as electronics circuitry, solid state

technology, basic business management, etc. At the end of his program he would receive a certificate stating his area of mastery, but more important would have the skill and educational pre-requisites for upgrading himself to the industrial electronics sales jobs.

Because of the individualized nature of the program the possibilities are unlimited. The open university as an umbrella organization could give credit for a wide range of experiences by giving mastery or equivalency tests and use the entire resources of the state to provide each individual with a program that meets his current needs and interests.

At the pre-school through grade 12 level we are launching a program to develop the Career Education concept as the central theme of elementary and secondary education.

Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr., The U. S. Commissioner of Education has been leading a drive to redirect the nations schools towards more career-oriented education. Many attempts have been made to develop the Career Education concept but few have been as well-defined or as comprehensive as we envision in Rhode Island

Career Education is seen to be a method of educating people towards an understanding of the essential interrelation of individuals in society. It intends to foster the skills of information acquisition, self-appraisal, synthesis, decision making, and planning, by using careers as the central focus of organization for all learning activities. This approach to education will promote individualization, promote the acquisition of life-oriented skills, emphasize the use of personal, internal motivation to learn in place of external, teacher applied motivation, and hopefully result in individuals better equipped to develop and carry out their own chosen pattern of living.

Currently, the State Department of Education is sponsoring a project to promote this form of Career Education. The first phase, funded mostly from Federal

Vocational Research and Development funds, in a kindergarten to twelth grade pilot project which would be conducted in East Providence.

The purpose of this project is to test the theory that an individualized career oriented program is superior to the traditional orientation. Further, we hope to determine which components or techniques are most effective. Pending the success of this project, the concepts developed here will be formulated first, into a state policy, and then into guidelines for the development of career education projects throughout the State.

We are committed, the Regents, the management team, and the entire State Department to fashioning an education system that meets the needs of every individual in Rhode Island. The development of an open university and the Career Education project are two steps towards achieving that goal.

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Career Education Project

Rhode Island State Department of Education

January 1972 - December 1973

The following pages illustrate the strategy of the Rhode Island State Department of Education for developing a State Plan for implementation of (K-12) Career Education Projects. While seeing Career Education as an unbroken continuum of experiences throughout life, we have divided the program into K-12 and post-secondary continuing education phases for administrative purposes. The K-12 strategy only is presented here.

As can be seen from the flow chart and key, we are placing the majority of our emphasis in this first phase on researching the institutional implications of Career Education. The evaluative information which we receive from the pilot and other smaller projects will form a large part of the input for the State Task Force decisions.

Although the major emphasis will be on project development and evaluation the purpose of components C - E and F on the chart is to insure that statewide professional and community participation exists from the outset of the development process.

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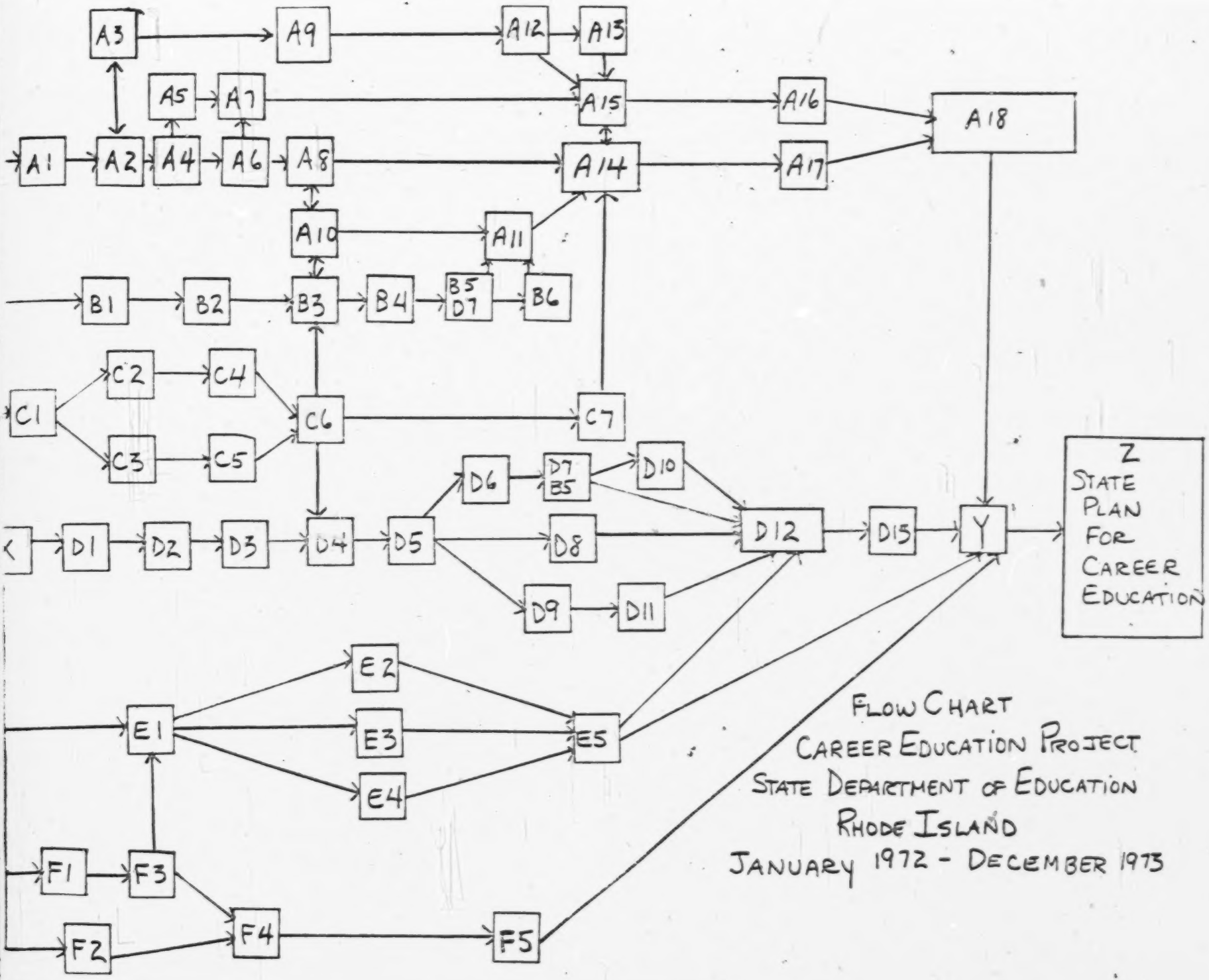


FLOW CHART
CAREER EDUCATION PROJECT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RHODE ISLAND
JANUARY 1972 - DECEMBER 1973

Career Education Project

Rhode Island State Department of Education

January 1972 - December 1973

Flow Chart Key

X PRELIMINARY PROGRAM SURVEY - State Department

A EVALUATION COMPONENT

A-1 Program Objectives Set - State Department - New England Resource Center for Occupational Education

A-2 Inputs Identified - State Department - NERCOE

A-3 Test Battery Designed - Rhode Island College

A-4 Output Format Identified - State Department - NERCOE

A-5 E.D.P. System Designed - Rhode Island Junior College

A-6 Evaluation Design Approved - State Department - NERCOE

A-7 E.D.P. Subcontract Approved - State Department - R.I.J.C.

A-8 Third Party Contract Approved - State Department - NERCOE

A-9 Testing Subcontract Approved - State Department - R.I.C.

A-10 Training Evaluation Designed Approved - State Department - R.I.C. - NERCOE

A-11 Workshop Evaluated - NERCOE

A-12 Pilot Pretest Administered and Scored - East Providence - R.I.C.

A-13 Pilot Postest Administered and Scored - E.P. - R.I.C.

A-14 Project Monitoring System Implemented - E.P. - NERCOE - State Department

A-15 E.D.P. System Implementation - R.I.J.C.

A-16 E.D.P. Outputs Generated - R.I.J.C.

A-17 Monitoring Reports Generated - NERCOE

A-18 Evaluation Report Completed - NERCOE

B TEACHER TRAINING COMPONENT

B-1 Preliminary Training Objectives Set - State Department - R.I.J.C.

B-2 Workshop Administration Selected - R.I.C.

B-3 Training Objectives Set-Content Approved - State Department - R.I.C.

B-4 Agenda Completed - State Department - R.I.C.

B-5-D-7 Workshop Implemented - R.I.C.

B-6 Follow-up Workshops Implemented - R.I.C.

C TEACHER TASK FORCE - COMPONENT

C-1 Task Force Objectives Set - State Department

C-2 Elementary Task Force Chosen - State Department

C-3 Secondary Task Force Chosen - State Department

C-4-C-5 Task Forces Implemented - Teachers

C-6 Task Force Reports Generated - Teachers

C-7 Task Force Monitoring Activities - Teachers

D PILOT PROJECT COMPONENT

D-1 Site Selected - State Department

D-2 Preliminary Parameters Set - Letter to Office of Education - State Department - E.P.

D-3 Program Component Objectives Set - E.P. - State Department - NERCOE

D-4 Pilot Proposal Developed - E.P.

D-5 Pilot Proposal Approved - State Department

D-6 Staff Selected - E.P.

D-7-B-5 Staff Trained - R.I.C.

D-8 Experimental and Control Groups Selected - E.P.

D-9 Equipment Ordered - E.P.

D-10 Materials Ordered - E.P.

D-11 Equipment Delivered - E.P.

D-12 Pilot Project Implementation - E.P.

D-13 Pilot Project Process Reports Completed - State Department - E.P.

E SUPPORTIVE SERVICES COMPONENT

E-1 Assistance to LEA's - State Department

E-2 Titles I and II Career Oriented Projects - State Department - LEA's

E-3 Title III Mini-grants - State Department - LEA's

E-4 Vocational Education Mini-grants - State Department - LEA's

E-5 Program Evaluations and Feedback - State Department - LEA's

F PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT

F-1 Commissioner's Policy Statement - State Department

F-2 Governor's Advisory Council on Vocational Education Public Relations Program

F-3 State Department of Education Position Paper on Career Education

F-4 Identification of Professional and Community Resources - G.A.C.V.E. - State Department

F-5 State Task Force on Career Education Selected - G.A.C.V.E. - State Department

Y STATE TASK FORCE ON CAREER EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION

Z RHODE ISLAND STATE PLAN FOR CAREER EDUCATION

Career Decision Making
As The Focus Of A
K-12 Curriculum

American public education has been the target of much criticism of late, directed at it both from within and without. Achieving relevancy for a large, varied population living in a highly complex and transitional society is difficult for so institutionalized a system. Although many attempts have been made, few have realized the goal of educating each individual to reach his potential in the style of life of his choice.

The intransigence of schools toward making really substantial changes is one of the reasons this goal has not been achieved. The rapid change in social values and the accompanying change in student behavior is yet another. A possible solution is for the schools to make a substantial change in their delivery system. This new system must deal with the great variety of student needs and be able to adapt to the complexity and variability of the society.

This brings us to the first tenet of our program. Schools should be set up in an individualized, learner, centered fashion. By becoming individualized, education can break its institutionalized inertia, and at the same time create a context for improved relationship with students by tailoring curriculum to each person's abilities and needs.

Next, since the schools purpose is to prepare a student for life; and work is still a major part of living, the school should focus more of its energies on career development. Two facts about today's society emphasize

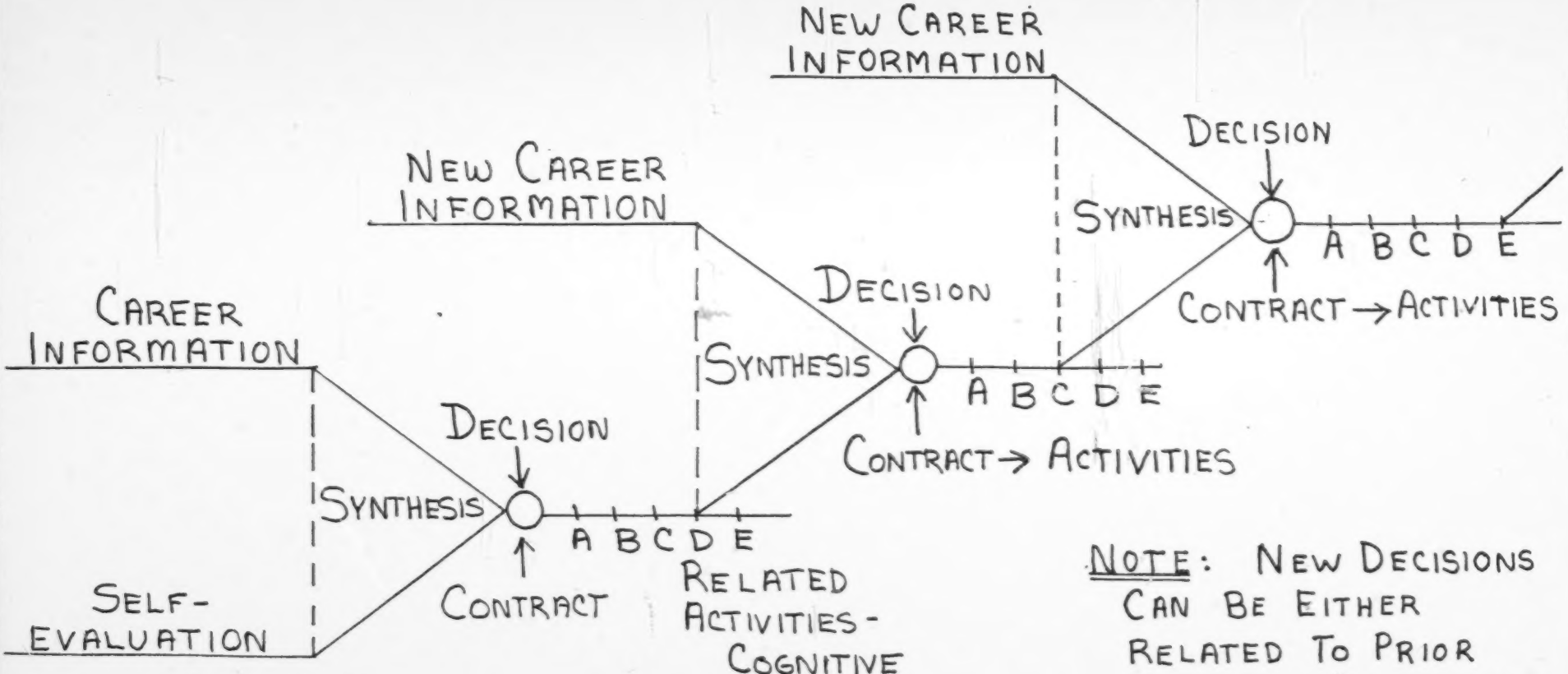
this point. First, with continued specialization, we have hundreds of different job ladders. Entrance into a job at any point on these ladders requires knowledge of job seeking skills, and appropriate work attitudes. Second, in our progression from a simple to an exceedingly complex society we have virtually eliminated the traditional means by which adolescents develop into working adults. Work as an activity has become increasingly less a part of the lives of youth. This brings us to our second tenet. Schools should focus on career development, as it is most pertinent to the survival of both the individual and the society. The third tenet is based on the first two. Since we are proposing a highly flexible system of education, one that responds to the needs of the individual whenever called upon, and since we are predicating a highly complex and transitional society which will demand flexibility of the individual as well as the educational system, we must enable people to adapt successfully both inside and outside the school. To insure that individual flexibility does not become fickleness and to insure that people make reasonable choices both in school and out, the school must train people in effective decision making skills.

Using these three tenets we are proposing to make, Individualized Career Decision Making the focus of a K-12 curriculum.

The accompanying paradigm illustrates the education process as it would exist on implementation of this concept.

Students would begin by seeking out general information about the world of work possibly by studying the fifteen basic Occupational Clusters. At the same time they would be given the tools and counseling that would lead to an evaluation of themselves at this particular point in time. The two sets of information would then by synthesized and the student would make a decision on one area of further exploration. At this point, the teacher who has been playing a strictly guidance role would contract with the individual

Career Decision Making As The Focus Of A K-12 Curriculum



Note: New Decisions Can Be Either Related To Prior Ones Or Represent A Totally New Area Of Exploration.

Cultural And Avocational Curricula Should Follow The Same Paradigm.

for certain activities which would increase his knowledge and understanding of the particular cluster or occupation, and of himself in relation to it.

The intensity and specificity of this process would be determined by the maturity level of the individual, proceeding from less intense, generalized, fantasy level explorations to highly intense, specific and realistic exploratory activities as the person matures in his vocational development.

The related activity continuum would include cognitive, affective and psychomotor components to insure a comprehensiveness of exploratory experiences. These activities should also be programmed to develop the necessary basic, cultural, and avocational skills which form the basis for success in work and leisure pursuits.

This process would insure relevancy by programming learner centered activities based on individual choices, it would bring the complex world of work into proper perspective and foster positive attitudes towards work. It would provide total self-exploration by programming activities related to all three domains and would provide internal motivation for learning traditional academic skills by relating these to the individuals' current commitments.

Furthermore, as the process diagram shows, the individual will be taught effective decision making skills by repetition of the process throughout his education experience. New decisions would be based on additional self-understanding achieved on previous activity continuums and on the new career information which must be sought when prior decisions prove to be unsuitable.

As is evident, the role of the teacher in this paradigm is greatly changed. Approximately half the activity is counselor oriented, aiding the student in seeking out career information in evaluating himself and arriving at a realistic self image and in helping him to synthesize the two bodies of information into an increasingly effective decision. Once the decision is made the teacher becomes an educational programmer, contracting with the

student for certain activities which will increase his knowledge and understanding of his choice, and concurrently helping him to refine his choices in academic areas. The role of instructor will be assumed only when students need clarification or explanation of activities or of their components.

When the student realizes that a particular activity continuum is unsuitable the teacher returns to the counselor role and aids the student in initiating a new decision making process followed by a new activity continuum.

While shifting a considerable amount of the counseling load to the teacher, this process does not eliminate the necessity of guidance personnel. The guidance role, however, becomes less oriented towards normalcy and more toward dealing with the extraordinary developmental and behavioral problems. Additionally, the guidance counselor would act as a resource for teachers in selecting activity continuums with high relativity to student decisions.

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